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AUTHOR Kogoe, Akrima
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ABSTRACT

Since the independence era of the 1960's, development of education in Africa has gone from euphoria to crisis and then to reform. The questioning of schooling that took place in Togo resulted in an educational reform and drastic changes in schools. Ten years later, it was deemed necessary to assess the effectiveness of the new system by looking into some of the educational indicators. The present evaluation, based on a questionnaire to gauge the perceptions of 200 parents, 200 teachers, and 200 students, looks at such indicators as climate and morale, examination and testing, teacher supply and competency, leadership, facilities, and planning. Based on the findings, 10 recommendations are presented, covering such topics as improved teacher training, more efficient use of educational resources, reappraisal of educational content and methods, professional education for administrators, and improved testing and selection methods. (Author/TE)

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A LOOK AT THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM BY SCHOOL CONSTITUENCIES:

THE TOGOLESE CASE

By

Akrima Kogoe, Ph.D
Assistant Professor of French Literature
Deputy Director for Secondary Education
Lome, Togo (West Africa)

EA 017 936

Abstract

Since the Independence era of the 1960's, development of education in Africa went from euphoria to crisis and then to reform. The questioning of the school which took place in Togo resulted in an educational reform and drastic changes in schools. It was deemed necessary, ten years later, to assess the effectiveness of the new system by looking into some of the educational indicators. The present evaluation must be seen as an administrative judgment based on the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students. The problem areas revealed and corrective solutions suggested are considered elements of the educational reform package.

Introduction

During the educational explosion and euphoria of the late 1960's, the school as an institution was a "sacred cow" above criticism and attack. A decade later the educational establishment was so demoralized by a drastic crisis (Coombs, 1968) that it will even take proposals about de-schooling seriously (Illich, 1970). In fact, voices began to talk louder about institutional malaise in the 1970's because, as Zachariah (1985) put it, the rapid expansion of educational systems in some countries brought about such problems as: irregular school attendance; high drop out (wastage) and failure (stagnation) rates; widespread relapse into illiteracy, severe regional imbalances in the progress of universalization with rural areas lagging far behind urban areas; lower rate of school attendance and completion by girls; poorly trained and poorly paid teachers; badly constructed and badly equipped schools; and widespread unemployment among even certified school leavers and college and university graduates (p. 1).

As a response to the state of crisis in education, many developing countries, among them the young Republic of Togo, proclaimed their quest for drastic changes in the school system through reforms. The most prominent objectives of these reforms were: (a) the desire to promote the quality of education; (b) various efforts aimed at the democratization of education such as the expansion of primary schooling and policies which entail the reduction of regional, social, and sexual inequalities; (c) the promotion of new and non-conventional forms of education such as non-formal, adult, and lifelong education; (d) the need to link education to the available prospects of labor market. In addition to these objectives, it is important to point out the frequency with which extra-educational goals are mentioned in the statement of reasons for educational reforms. Examples of this would be the desire to produce better, more loyal citizens having attitudes deemed favorable to national unity, general social and economic development objectives, as well as the intentions to use education to change conditions in the cultural and political arenas of the society (Sack, 1981).

There has been a decade now since these aims were initiated by the reform movement in Togo. But, as of now, no assessment has been was made of the new system of education. Thus, the present paper represents the

very first analysis and evaluation of the educational achievement during the past ten years. It attempts to identify the on-going issues and, on the basis of findings, to reveal some central problems to be solved for restructuring Togo's education for the future.

This evaluative study of the current perception of the state of schools in Togo by parents, teachers, and students looks at such indicators as climate and morale, examination and testing, teacher supply and competency, leadership, facilities, and planning.

The 1975 Educational Reform

The educational reform in Togo, like in many African countries, is the outcome of the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, and of the 1964 Conference of African Ministers of Education held in Abidjan. Shortly after these meetings, Togo's educators began asking themselves what the aims and principles of the nation's educational program should be. How could education bring about social integration and national unity? How should the teachers be trained? How could the curricula be modified to stimulate economic growth and development?

In order to examine these questions, research groups travelled extensively throughout the country: schools were visited; talks were held with headmasters, principals, inspectors and school constituencies; public meetings with teachers, parents, and students were convened at which educational issues were discussed and suggestions invited; and, individuals and groups were asked to present their views by responding to questionnaires. Based on the data collected, working papers were drafted presenting the major educational issues with alternative solutions. All these were set in motion and gave shape to the educational reform which has been underway since 1975.

The reform encompasses two categories of goals and objectives for education in Togo. The first are the general goals emanating from the nature of man and the process of education. The second category of aims are those which derive from the needs of Togolese life. These needs command the quest of the following:

1. Education for unity and citizenship. Togo being composed of many ethnic groups has a pressing need to develop through its educational system a sense of nationality among its population; an allegiance to the entire country that goes beyond the family, the tribe, or the particular section of the country in which the individual happens to be living. Coupled with this, there is a need for a civic sense which acquaints Togolese with their rights and privileges and with their responsibilities and duties toward the country. Education should also be instrumental in the introduction of a common native language among all citizens in order to seal, promote, and enhance this national unity.

2. Education for development--meaning the training of a literate and skilled labor force; thus, enabling the resources of the country to be properly exploited agricultural and industrial production to be increased, and, in general, the standard of living of the people to be raised.

3. Education for self-reliance aimed at bringing the national economy under local control and reducing the dependence on foreign aid.

4. Education for all and for democracy. This involves providing equal educational opportunities for all and giving each person a voice in their own affairs as well as the chance to participate directly or through respresentatives in decisions affecting their lives. If democracy is to work, people must have sufficient information and education to make wise decisions and their decisions must be respected.

The education reform emphasizes non-formal education, vocational technical education, compulsory school attendance, pre-schooling, continuing education, and curricula and syllabi developed from local needs. Other aims include: (a) the professional training of an adequate number of teachers; (b) the publishing of a sufficient number of textbooks appropriate to the goals of the new curricula; (c) the involvement of parents in the education process; (d) the use of the local community as a learning

environment; (e) the integration of native languages and cultural values into the school curricula; and, (f) the use of experienced teaching and learning techniques.

It was deemed important after ten years of operation to pass some judgment on the degree of success that has been achieved in the implementation of the reform. This judgment is a formative evaluation which does no more than just touch upon some of the questions raised by the reform. Therefore, the main focus is not an overall assessment of the school system by parents, teachers, and students. We are more concerned with how best the Togolese educational reform can be implemented rather than with the controversial question of whether Togo's educational reform is feasible.

Rationale and Pertinent Information

Reforms, the evaluation of reform, and general evaluation tools have received a fair amount of attention over the past decades. Sack (1981) defined reform as a "system wide effort at creating change whose need and impact are often broader than the confines of the educational system itself," (p. 40). Simmons (1976) stated that educational reforms are those "changes in educational policy which case major transformations in either educational budget, the slope of the pyramid of school enrollment, or the effect of educational investment in individual or social development," (p. 1). Adams (1978) commented that reforms are "innovations that are in widespread use throughout an identified target population," (p. 6).

Reforms need to be evaluated and the process of evaluation is predicated upon the assumptions that there must be goals or destinations, that there must be a means of determining progress at different stages, and that there must be techniques for relating progress at one point to that of another in such a way as to determine whether improvement has been made and, if so, how much (Harrison, 1968). Alkin (1970) in analyzing alternative ways for improving school assessment noted that evaluation is "the process of ascertaining the decisions to be made, selecting related information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision makers in selecting alternatives," (p. 1). Because educational

evaluation enables determination of how much progress has been made, it is particularly useful in determining exactly what to do next. In a greater sense, as Harrison put it, "evaluation is a re-affirmation of allegiance to the slated aims of education in the sense that the program of offerings and the effectiveness of the methodology employed are examined in the height of these aims," (p. 228). We must distinguish two kinds of evaluation: the first type guides and aides educational development; the second gives judgment as to the value or worth of the outcomes of the reform. Scriven (1967) applied the terms formative evaluation and summative evaluation respectively to the two kinds. Our research is a formative evaluation.

One way of evaluating the goals, objectives and aims of education is to look at the educational indicators. The term educational indicators has been defined (Gooler, 1975) as statistics that enable interested publics to know the status of education at a particular moment in time with respect to selected variables, to make comparisons in that status over time, and to project future status. Educational indicators are seen as time-series statistics that permit a study of trends and changes in education. Gooler provided a neat summary of categories of educational indicators of which he identified five as follows: (1) the access to education and participation to educational activities; (2) the aspirations, needs, and desires of various kinds of people to education; (3) the level of educational achievement; (4) the impact of education on social, economic, and cultural systems; and (5) the various kinds of educational resources available.

The present paper deals mainly with the last educational indicator meaning the quality and quantity of the human and material resources and the climate of school in Togo. To achieve this, attention is concentrated upon the following areas: evaluation and testing of students, climate and morale, leadership, planning, number and quality of faculty, and number and quality of material and textbooks.

Student evaluation and testing is to be questioned seriously, expecially in such educational systems like the one in operation in Togo which gives very poor return and where failure is the rule and success the exception. In order to secure a good place in the line of job-seekers, students have

to scramble for marks and achieve good examination results. This has strong repercussions on teaching and learning and because students tend to learn for external reward, their evaluation and testing hardly assesses genuine educational values.

Schools cannot be effective organizations unless teachers and students find satisfaction in their work. It is a major responsibility of school executives to create a climate which brings about a high degree of teacher/student satisfaction and morale. Call (1958) defines morale as: "a mental condition which leads individuals and groups willingly to subordinate their personal objectives, temporarily and within reason to further the successful achievement of the institution's objective," (p. 267). He comments further that teachers with good morale will not only be inclined to remain in teaching, but also be willing to accept and execute directions, conform cheerfully to reasonable discipline and make best efforts without needing any pressure from school executives. Besides it is a well known fact that schools with good organizational climate and leadership tend to have the best student retention and achievement.

Today's schools are in need of strong leadership to overcome their sorry state. Leadership is the process through which an administrator or a teacher (the leader) secures the cooperation of teachers or students (the followers) toward goal achievement in schools (Jacobson, et al, 1973). A good reform cannot take place without systematic planning. Planning is the process of preparing a set of decisions for action in the future directed toward achieving goals (Jacobs, 1964). Education reformers who deal with such dynamic dimensions as goals, processes, or people need to know that planning is a day-to-day exercise which takes place at different levels of the educational system.

Teacher supply and competency are decisive factors in translating a revised curriculum into improved classroom practices. Actually, for a reform to succeed, two conditions are to be met: the quality and quantity of teachers and the nature and suitability of the administration. Nevertheless, when the educational and professional qualifications of teachers are not high, good textbooks and instructional materials can help overcome deficiencies. Altbach (1983) stated that "textbooks are an integral part of the educational enterprise and are especially important

in the third world. Because of variations in the quality and training of teachers, regional differences and a lack of clearly understood educational approaches, the textbook is at the heart of schooling," (p. 324). Heyneman, et al (1978) focuses upon the relationship between students achievement and textbook supply and concluded that "the availability of books appears to be the single most consistently positive school factor in predicting academic achievement," (p. 2).

The present research is a administrative judgment based on the researcher's immersion in the living evolution of the reform being implemented reinforced by documented answers to specific questions by school constituencies.

Research Project and Sample

To investigate school constituencies' perceptions of the effectiveness of Togolese educational reform, a study was conducted to address the following research questions:

1. How would you characterize the climate in schools?

2. How would you rank the following instrumental areas in need of immediate improvement in schools: student evaluation and testing, climate and morale, leadership, planning, number and quality of faculty, and number and quality of material and textbooks.

3. Is the reform successful in achieving its intended goals and objectives?

The population for the study comprises 600 school constituencies. For this purpose 200 teachers, 200 parents, and 200 students were randomly selected. A survey instrument was developed and pilot tested in interviews with 20 elementary and secondary school inspectors and principals. Results were used to construct the final questionnaire.

Data Collection

Six hundred questionnaires were sent to the target population in March,

1985. Of the 600 questionnaires distributed, 520 were completed for a return rate of 86.6 percent. The distribution of respondents is 177 teachers, 200 parents, and 143 students. The analysis of the returns was based upon frequency distribution and the frequencies were converted into percentages.

Summary of Findings

FIGURE 1: ASSESSMENT OF THE CUSTODIALITY OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

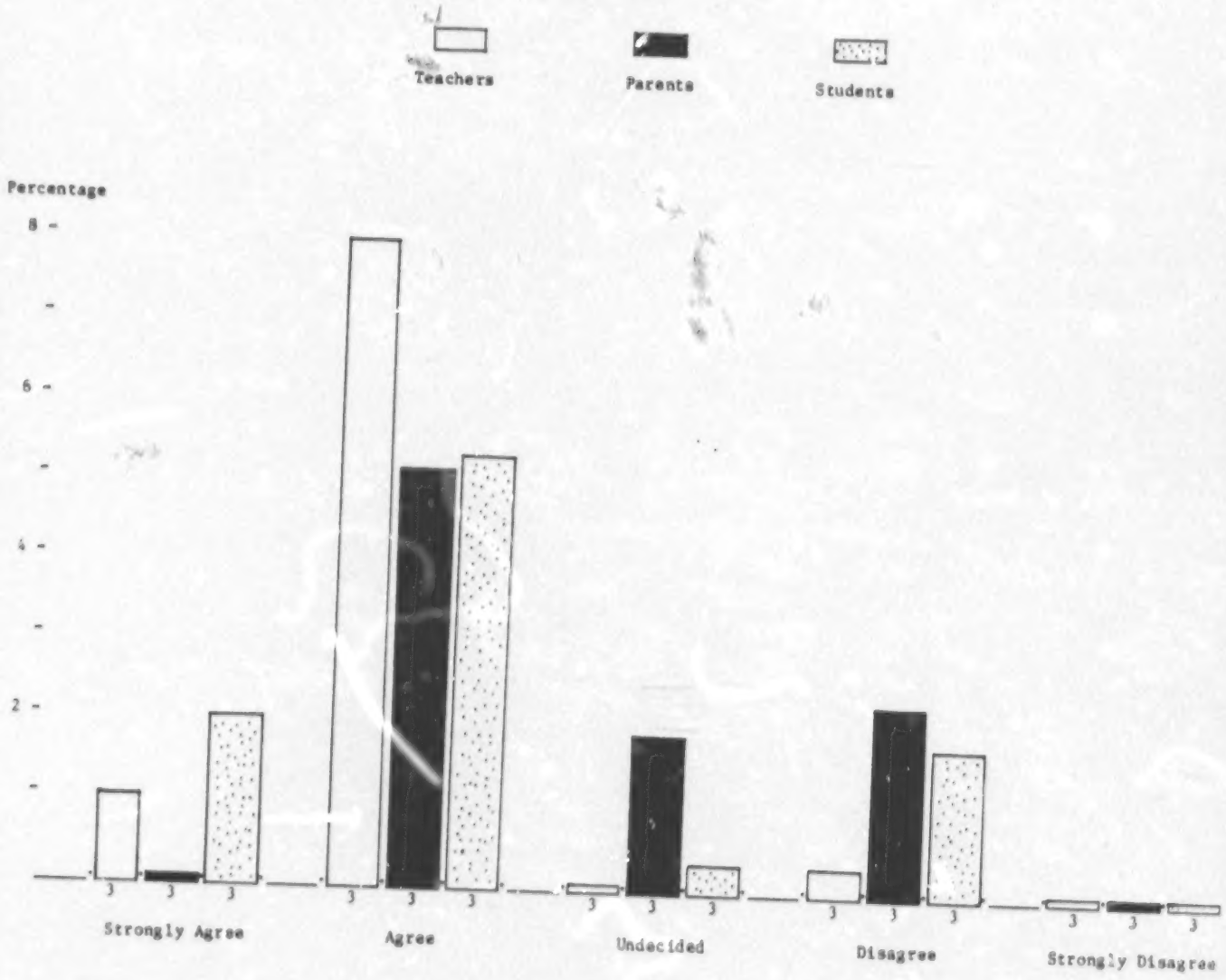

TABLE 2

RANKING OF AREAS IN NEED OF IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT

Immediate Improvement Areas	Parents			Teachers			Students			Total		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank
Number and Quality of Material	41	20.5	3	27	15.2	4	62	44.0	1	130	25.0	1
Number and Quality of Faculty	53	26.5	2	23	12.9	5	31	21.6	2	107	20.5	2
Leadership	85	42.5	1	13	7.3	6	2	1.3	6	100	19.2	3
Climate and Morale	14	7.0	4	39	22.0	2	18	12.5	4	71	13.6	4
Students' Evaluation and Testing	5	2.5	5	40	22.5	1	23	16.0	3	68	13.0	5
Planning	2	1.0	6	29	16.3	3	7	4.8	5	38	7.3	6

TABLE 3

ASSESSMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The Reform: Is a Success								
Achieves its Goals and Objectives	Teachers		Parents		Students		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Strongly Disagree	62	35.0	181	90.5	93	65.0	33[illegible]	64.6
Disagree	102	57.6	8	4.0	50	34.9	160	30.7
Undecided	13	7.3	1	0.5	0	0.0	14	2.6
Agree	0	0.0	10	5.0	0	0.0	10	1.9
Strongly Agree	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Summary of Findings - Continued

Respondent ratings of school climate are shown in Figure 1, whereas Tables 2 and 3 present the areas in need of immediate improvement and the assessment of Togo's educational reform. Figure 1 indicates that the prevailing climate and atmosphere in schools is rather custodial. To that, 80 percent of teachers agreed, 11.8 strongly agreed, and only 5 percent expressed an oppostie point of view. The statement that the climate in schools is permissive entailed a 55.5 percent disagreement response from parents; 18.5 percent were undecided, and 26.0 percent readily agreed to it; 56.6 percent of students rejected the assumption that the climate in schools is about right; 22.3 percent strongly disapproved the statement; whereas, 15.3 percent endorsed it.

The areas in need of immediate improvement as perceived by parents are related to and dependent on leadership (42.5 percent), number and quality of faculty (26.5 percent), and number and quality of material and textbooks (20.5 percent). Forty-six teachers, or 25.9 percent of those surveyed, indicated student evaluation and testing as being the main point of concern, followed by climate, morale, and material. Forty-four percent of students requested more material and textbooks and 21.6 percent favored more competent teachers.

Looking at the educational reform, the surveyed population expressed a strong dissatisfaction with the current state of schools. The statement that the reform is a success and achieves its goals and objectives entailed a 35.0 percent strongly disagree response from teachers, 90.5 percent from parents and 65.0 percent from students. Those who just disagree included 57.6 percent of teachers, 4.0 percent of parents, and 34.9 percent of students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the findings one can say that reform is far from reaching the goals and objectives it was set out for. Much remains to be done to overcome the new educational crisis which reads mainly as a crisis of relevance of imported institutions, structures and values, of scarce resources and personnel, and lack of leadership.

The effectiveness of a reform is not, of course, to be measured only by student evaluation and testing results or school climate but also by the quality of life in schools and the outlook and orientations of teachers, students, and parents. The researcher found no satisfaction either from inside or outside the schools with these aspects of quality.

Almost all developing countries are faced with the same educational problems: There are great shortages of properly qualified teachers, of adequate buildings and facilities, and of the right kind of books. Basically, the problem is an economic one. Nevertheless, the gravity of these issues can be greatly mitigated by the adoption of measures which have been tried elsewhere with more success.

1. With regard to the shortage of properly qualified teachers, several schemes aiming at not only a quantitative expansion, but also qualitative improvement of the teaching personnel should concentrate on special courses of an intensive nature stretched over a long period, or special short term in service training courses.

2. More efficient use of educational resources should be stressed. There are many promising ways to improve the efficiency and productivity of an educational system: by making the curriculum more relevant, by improving teaching and learning methods, by spending more on textbooks and by finding ways to reduce the high drop out and repeater rates.

3. Educational equipment and media should be part of new targets. The reason is that large scale production of the pre-tested teaching/learning materials reduces costs, eliminates the time wasted by

teachers in producing their own inferior teaching aids and improves their efficiency.

4. The educational content and methods should be reappraised. The essential need is to find practical ways to bring teachers, teaching materials, and classroom instruction continually up-to-date. It also means finding a means to adapt the educational system, its structure, and offerings to the widely varying needs and capabilities of different students as individuals.

5. The ministry of education should develop professional education for school executives with an emphasis on those subject and content areas which deal with the theory and practice of planning, management, evaluation, in-service development for teachers, climate and morale building and maintaining, the knowledge of the decision making and communication process, and the understanding of the principles of leadership--its scope and styles.

6. The ministry of education should undertake a major development project to design diagnostic tests, develop a proper system for assessing student progress, and train teachers in the use of these tests.

7. The present system of selection by elimination should be replaced by a system of selection by orientation based on the earliest possible identification of the nature and level of capacities shown by students, and on guidance geared by the results of that identification.

8. Togo should develop a capacity to analyze examination and evaluation results as a contribution to curriculum reform and improve teaching as a means of improving the examinations themselves.

9. Teacher training must constitute a question fundamental to all future educational planning. As long as it is not satisfactorily answered, it will be idle to set up ambitious curricula or construct fine theories about what should be achieved. The only solution would be a full university training for teachers at every level.

10. Finally, research should be systematically conducted in order to determine methods of utilizing school leaders to a greater advantage in meeting the educational growth needs of Togo. To achieve this, greater efficiency and relevance should be sought within the context of the existing system in the short term while planning for radical change in the future.

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